



2004-2007 Strategic Business Plan

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

SPU's Strategic Business Plan defines the vision, mission, values and goals for our organization and our overall business strategy. Our goals fall into six essential areas of our business: **assets and operating infrastructure, customers, community, environment, employees and organizational excellence**. While our goals have remained relatively constant over time, we are changing our emphasis to accommodate the **issues** and challenges we're facing in the next four years. The plan identifies the broad **initiatives** we'll use to address each of our key issues.



SPU Director Chuck Clarke

Since the issues we face continue to change over time, we must foresee and adapt to emerging issues and prepare for unanticipated events. As you review the strategic plan, you will notice four consistent key points:

- Our most important responsibility is providing basic utility service;
- Customer service is a key to our success;
- Employees must be provided with resources to do their jobs;
- We are changing the way we make all decisions by incorporating social, environmental and financial outcomes and benefits.

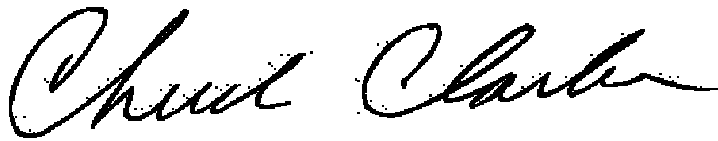
To help differentiate between what is important in our organization and what is strategic, this plan is more concise and targeted toward fewer issues than previous strategic plans. Consequently, the plan only addresses issues that require major shifts in priorities and direction.

A major shift for SPU is the **asset management** approach, the central theme of our strategic business plan. Asset management simply involves meeting customer and environmental service levels at the lowest life-cycle cost. Asset management and several related concepts woven throughout the plan are changing the way we make decisions including:

- **Triple Bottom Line:** Recognizing that our actions, projects and programs affect social, environmental and financial outcomes. These positive and negative outcomes will be quantified and weighed in decision-making processes.
- **Life-Cycle Costs:** Decisions regarding projects and programs will be evaluated over the lifetime of the project or program. Costs include the initial development or construction costs, annual maintenance costs, social costs, and environmental costs. Benefits will also be evaluated over the life of the project or program.

- **Service Level Standards:** Measures of service that are seen by customers as a high priority. These are based on either customer or environmental service levels. These measures will be consistently collected, audited and reported.

An effective implementation process is key toward achieving success of our strategic plan. **Action plans**, to be developed by each branch, will outline the tasks and products necessary to implement each strategic initiative in the strategic plan. The strategic plans for central support functions including Human Resources, Information Technology and Communications are linked to and support our strategic plan. I'm confident this plan will help us achieve our customer's expectations of excellence in utility services.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chuck Clarke". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Chuck" and last name "Clarke" clearly distinguishable.

Chuck Clarke,
SPU Director

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VISION

We bring world class utility services to our community.

Our vision of world class is based on the principle that we strive to make all aspects of our services to customers the best they can possibly be.

MISSION STATEMENT

We provide our customers with reliable water, sewer, drainage and solid waste services. We protect public health and balance our social and environmental responsibilities to the citizens and community, while providing cost effective services to our ratepayers.

ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

The organizational values we model and promote are:

Safety - We work to protect our customers and employees from injuries and hazardous conditions.

Respect - We hold each other in high regard for our dedication, expertise, creativity and teamwork.

Diversity - We appreciate our diverse backgrounds and cultures and value each other's contributions.

Trust - We work to earn the confidence of our customers and co-workers, so they can rely on our integrity, ability and judgment.

Humor - We have fun and promote a positive work environment.

Productivity - We are inspired by the work we do and demonstrate our enthusiasm through the results we achieve.

Integrity - We are honest and ethical in our interactions with customers, stakeholders and employees.

Innovation - We encourage employees to challenge traditional viewpoints, seek out best practices, and embrace lifetime learning.

Partnership - We foster and maintain effective relationships with key stakeholders, businesses, other city departments and government agencies.

GOAL AREAS AND GOALS

Assets and Operating Infrastructure

Provide reliable infrastructure and high quality, cost effective utility services for drinking water, solid waste collection and disposal, and stormwater and wastewater removal.

Customers

Provide exceptional customer service.

Employees

Create a high-performance workplace with a diverse and inspired workforce.

Environment

Protect and enhance the environment and promote environmental justice through prioritized capital investments, utility operations and programs.

Community

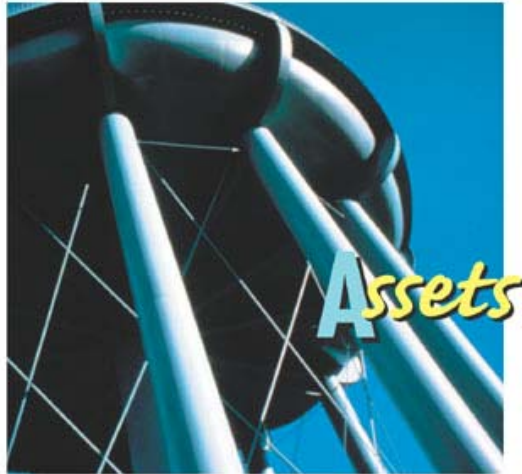
Conduct utility operations and programs to maximize social benefits, improve the quality of life for all Seattle citizens, and build confidence in local government.

Organizational Excellence

Continuously improve organizational performance for public benefit.

ASSETS AND OPERATING INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal: Provide reliable infrastructure and high quality, cost effective utility services for drinking water, solid waste collection and disposal, and stormwater and wastewater removal.



Strategic Issue

1) SPU has initiated a self-assessment of our utility infrastructure using best practice models. This process helped identify valuable opportunities to improve our capital investment strategy through asset management. Moving forward with this approach requires justifying capital projects based on full life-cycle costs. We need to quantify overall project benefits, including social, environmental and economic outcomes. Project and program recommendations should clearly articulate financial implications and have strong ties to Comprehensive and Master plans. Earlier executive review and attention to up-front expenditures during the program/project development phase will increase accountability.

Strategic Initiatives

1.1) Develop and implement an asset management strategy

- Establish and strengthen an Asset Management Committee to review and ensure that capital projects and programs are meeting asset management standards prior to implementation
- Establish an Asset Management Team to provide analytical tools for use in developing operational and capital programs
- Develop valuation methodologies that address triple bottom line accountability
- Introduce life-cycle cost concepts and develop training using capital project business cases

ASSETS AND OPERATING INFRASTRUCTURE (cont.)

- Develop risk/asset-based decision-making framework for long-term investments
 - Perform operational analysis
 - Identify and inventory assets
 - Document associated risks, condition, O&M requirements, service levels and tools to support business needs
 - Develop criticality framework/assessments
- Develop Asset Maintenance Agreements (AMA's) in Operations Branch
- Develop Strategic Asset Management Plans (SAMP's) for all major asset classifications in the utility
- Develop a configuration management system to integrate the utility's data on asset infrastructure and operations
- Develop and implement a comprehensive communications strategy to support asset management goals
- Develop and improve asset costing systems

1.2) Establish strategic planning direction for SPU lines of business through the Comprehensive Master Planning process

- Develop consistent analytical framework for all comprehensive plans, including financial implications of recommended projects/programs
- Develop a Comprehensive Water Plan
- Update Water System Plan
- Complete Solid Waste Facility Master Plan
- Complete Solid Waste Comprehensive Plan
- Complete Comprehensive Drainage Plan
- Establish scope, schedule and budget for Wastewater Comprehensive Plan
- Develop and implement a land management plan for Tolt Watershed
- Involve Executive Team throughout the process

Strategic Issue

2) Capital costs are the most significant rate driver in SPU water and drainage lines of business and are becoming a major component in solid waste. We need to establish a more disciplined and deliberate CIP process from beginning to end. Preliminary benchmarking revealed that our administrative costs are high compared to actual construction costs. We need to consolidate and redesign our preliminary engineering function. We need to confirm our benchmarks and improve our end

performance in capital project delivery. We need to actively track project costs through all phases.

Strategic Initiatives

2.1) Implement capital investment strategy that improves the efficiency of our CIP project delivery and increases percentage of funding going to hard costs.

- Design and implement a data tracking/reporting system for hard and soft costs
- Review actual CIP performance with breakout of hard versus soft costs and final versus original budget
- Solicit an external review of hard versus soft costs of CIP delivery
- Improve the efficiencies of CIP contract delivery
- Perfect our tools for CIP contracting, including evaluation of Small Public Works Roster Contracts, open-end and delivery order contracting, and lump sum bidding
- Improve information flow between operations and maintenance staff and the staff responsible for asset planning, design, procurement and data systems
- Educate and inform project managers about changes in the new CIP process

2.2) Establish a deliberate and robust preliminary engineering function

- Establish Resource Planning as the buyer of CIP projects with lead responsibility for overseeing project planning, design, implementation and transfer to operations (i.e. cradle to grave management)
- Establish Engineering Service Branch as service provider of Engineering Services
- Revise budget process to establish project funding levels, following preliminary engineering
- Provide adequate funding pool for preliminary engineering costs

2.3) Improve delivery of major capital projects

- Increase frequency of projects completed on time and on budget
- Develop strategy to identify and implement required engineering standards
- Complete, approve and implement SPU Computer Aided Design (CAD) standards
- Fund and implement CIP Project Tracking System

2.4) Develop refined guidelines and standards for estimating and budgeting project costs

2.5) Improve coordination of construction projects

- Partner with SDOT to reengineer SDOT's right-of-way (ROW) management
- Partner in funding and development of ROW Manual and planning coordination of CIP programs/projects in the ROW.
- Partner with SDOT for the re-engineering of utility coordination for budgeted (CIP & O&M) work in the ROW

CUSTOMERS

Goal: Provide exceptional customer service.



Strategic Issue

3) SPU exists to provide essential services to our citizens. The issues citizens care most about include water quality, water supply, garbage and yard waste pick up, sewer and recycling services, water conservation and stormwater drainage. We need to identify the appropriate level of customer service when delivering these services and establish consistent customer service standards. Once developed, the service levels need to be costed to determine the financial, social and environmental impacts of meeting the proposed standards. Our asset management framework will use these customer service standards to guide capital and programmatic investment decisions.

Strategic Initiative

3.1) Develop and implement customer service level standards

- Document existing levels of customer service by Line of Business (LOB)
- Engage customers in the process for setting standards
- Develop measurable service levels and targets for each LOB
- Implement customer service level standards
- Monitor and report back to customers progress in meeting standards

Strategic Issue

4) As SPU moves towards a triple bottom line philosophy of valuing economic, environmental and social goals, the utility needs to report its progress back to customers. We need a fully developed customer reporting system to clarify customers' expectations and preferred methods of service delivery.

Strategic Initiatives

4.1) Conduct residential and commercial customer service survey

- Identify the importance of and satisfaction with utility services among customers
- Identify gaps in services and customer satisfaction
- Conduct end of call customer service survey
- Develop a process to follow up with customers regarding their service experience

4.2) Implement improved customer communications

- Educate stakeholders about our triple bottom line performance
- Communicate the benefits of our Capital Improvement programs to customers
- Improve communication distribution systems to insure residents and businesses receive accurate and timely information regarding CIP work planned for their community

Strategic Issue

5) A critical component of our service delivery is the direct contact we have with customers. Employees in field operations, community services and the call center should be our daily ambassadors to our customers.

Strategic Initiatives

5.1) Build a culture of customer service excellence

- Implement a complaint tracking system to manage and evaluate customer service issues and responses
- Implement customer service training for all direct contact staff for both SCL and SPU
- Include customer service element in leadership training
- Design SCL/SPU customer service training pilot
- Prepare and deliver a training program on customer service goals

5.2) Improve tracking of customer inquiries and complaints

- Improve resolutions for complaints and customer satisfaction issues
- Establish a benchmark to improve methods and lower costs
- Establish a tracking system for calls and contacts regarding risks to SPU and the city

Strategic Issue

6) The public continues to increase its use of the Internet and both our customers and employees expect to do business via the web. SPU's web infrastructure, business culture and staffing strategies need to be updated to meet this increasing demand.

Strategic Initiatives

6.1) Improve web content and services on SPU's external web site

- Redesign external web site to better meet the needs of SPU customers
- Implement a content management system to increase efficiency
- Develop key self-service web applications including customer account management and payment options
- Improve SPU's ability to evaluate effectiveness of web content and services

6.2) Develop proposal for improving SPU's internal web site

- Redesign internal web site to better meet the needs of employees
- Implement content management system to increase efficiency
- Analyze and align connections between various web technologies

6.3) Identify priorities and develop staffing strategies for supporting SPU's web content and services

- Develop methodology for evaluating and prioritizing new web project requests
- Set priorities for ongoing maintenance of non-SPU branded web sites
- Analyze staffing requirements for implementing and supporting web initiatives

EMPLOYEES

Goal: Create a high-performance workplace with a diverse and inspired workforce.



Strategic Issue

7) SPU is committed to the safety of our employees. We must build and maintain a culture of safety at all levels throughout the organization. A comprehensive approach to safety includes employee awareness, compliance training and shared accountability for a safe workplace. Employee workplace security is an evolving and important issue for SPU.

Strategic Initiative

7.1) Establish safety programs and support a safety culture throughout the organization

- Develop employee and supervisor expectations and promote personal accountability
- Improve safety training program and meet or exceed compliance targets
- Conduct cultural safety survey
- Complete site-specific hazard audits
- Establish site-specific safety work plans
- Integrate Return to Work program data into safety plans
- Establish incentives for accident prevention and safety compliance
- Implement employee-related security policies, procedures and training

Strategic Issue

8) Our workforce is enriched and strengthened by the diversity of our employees. SPU will continue its commitment to recognizing and embracing diversity in all forms. We must maintain a diversity profile that reflects the demographics of our city.

Strategic Initiatives

8.1) Establish and maintain programs that support diversity in the workplace

- Conduct diversity survey and use data to formulate plans
- Ensure workforce reflects city demographics
- Ensure Department-wide engagement with the Diversity Team
- Provide diversity awareness and other related training
- Develop organization-wide cultural assessments and action plans

Strategic Issue

9) We rely on SPU employees to perform the work of a world class utility, which requires world class employees. We need to provide employee development, support and assurance of a positive and affirming culture. We also need to focus on the potential loss of critical skills due to workforce trends with appropriate succession planning. Our ability to produce and analyze workforce data will help us understand local and national workforce trends and stay ahead of the rapidly changing work environment.

Strategic Initiatives

9.1) Establish employee development programs that support business needs

- Continue to emphasize mandatory Supervisor Training program
- Increase leadership within the organization (Directions program, NOVA, etc.)
- Re-engineer training service delivery to align with the Strategic Business Plan
- Analyze training needs for non-supervisory employees
- Conduct asset management training for field staff

9.2) Succession planning and future workforce development

- Develop succession strategies and programs to address critical skill gap replacement options
- Develop methods for capturing institutional knowledge of staff performing critical/unique functions

- Develop a comprehensive recruitment/retention plan for the utility
- Develop workforce rotation proposal and strategies to address emerging issues

9.3) Produce and analyze workforce data

- Improve accuracy and utilization of employee data systems
- Integrate workforce data with budget reports and operational performance data
- Research, analyze and report workforce trends and develop strategies to utilize data
- Continue Employee Voice survey process, analysis and action planning

Strategic Issue

10) SPU is working to define the elements of a world class utility, including the requirements of our future workforce. Best practice models reflect a more adaptive, efficient and flexible workforce. We need to partner with labor in this effort to explore and design alternatives.

Strategic Initiatives

10.1) Maintain strong relationships with labor

- Initiate joint efforts between labor and management and develop strategies to address future workforce issues

10.2) Deploy teams to other utilities to view best practices in workforce development

10.3) Develop strategies to incorporate new staffing options for project, peak and seasonal workloads

10.4) Develop staff training initiatives designed to create workforce flexibility and create career paths for upward mobility

***Additional HR issues and initiatives are included in the HR strategic plan**

ENVIRONMENT

Goal: Protect and enhance the environment and promote environmental justice through prioritized capital investments, utility operations and programs.



Strategic Issue

11) SPU's corporate environmental goal focuses on prioritizing actions that preserve and enhance environmental conditions within the city and regionally. This includes actions relating to SPU's operations, as well as the impacts of our work with the public and other organizations. Our actions must be grounded in sound science and improved over time based on our experience and increasing scientific knowledge. We need to emulate and restore natural systems that are effective in delivering utility services or are important to the productivity and diversity of species. We also need to embrace awareness of equity and justice for people and neighborhoods across the city.

Strategic Initiatives

11.1) Implement the Environmental Performance System

- Implement and specify actions that address environmental objectives specified in the corporate environmental policy
- Propose a timeline and develop an Environmental Action Blueprint
- Develop and implement a data management system within Natural Resource section, Watershed division, and Strategic Operations
- Refine and implement the existing Corporate Environmental Auditing program
- Provide adequate support to permitting and regulatory compliance processes

11.2) Support major environmental initiatives

- Implement Cedar River Habitat Conservation Plan commitments
- Maintain and achieve water conservation goals through the regional 1% for Conservation program
- Implement 60% Recycling Initiative
- Develop Natural Drainage Systems infrastructure in designated areas draining to creeks

Strategic Issue

12) SPU is committed to protecting the environment during the course of conducting utility business. We need field operations staff and managers to be equipped with state-of-the-art information and tools for environmental management and compliance with environmental regulations. We need to conduct an assessment of our capabilities to practice sound environmental management in all operations and make adjustments as needed.

Strategic Initiative

12.1) Enhance environmental protection and compliance within utility operations

- Develop and implement best management practices for environmentally sensitive operations
- Assess and prioritize environmental risks in operations and construction activities
- Monitor and track environmental performance in operations

Strategic Issue

13) A major challenge to incorporating environmental values in our service delivery is developing adequate valuation methods. We need to contribute triple bottom line business case assessments for projects and programs and present better environmental and business tradeoffs to decision-makers.

Strategic Initiative

13.1) Develop an adequate environmental level of service definition and approach

- Document current environmental service levels

- Identify target environmental conditions and include description of associated risks and uncertainties
- Obtain customer input on desired environmental service levels and willingness to pay for them

Strategic Issue

14) *SPU faces challenges in integrating environmental science, benefits, risks and outcomes in its decision-making. We need to better utilize scientific information in our capital, operational and management decisions. We also need to use science to develop and promote effective solutions for Seattle's environmental regulations.*

Strategic Initiatives

14.1) Integrate science information and analysis into SPU decision-making forums

14.2) Use scientific information in proposing alternative approaches to regulatory requirements

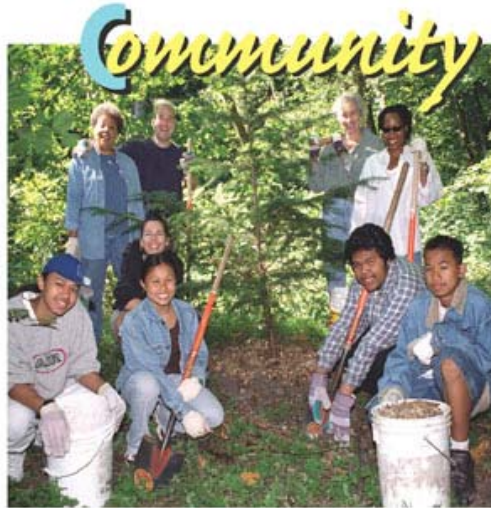
- Develop a strategy for addressing stormwater needs relative to our NPDES stormwater permit, taking alternative approaches into consideration

14.3) Prioritize and integrate scientific research, data and information flow to decision-makers

- Coordinate and align science, environmental management and functions within the department
- Establish the science group as a service provider for the entire department

COMMUNITY

Goal: Conduct utility operations and programs to maximize social benefits, improve the quality of life for Seattle citizens, and build confidence in local government.



Strategic Issue

15) SPU provides social and public benefits beyond traditional utility services. The Mayor has identified a number of priority community enhancement and mobility projects for the coming years and has set forth an ambitious agenda and schedule for our participation. SPU will lend support to many transit initiatives in the region. We will also add open space throughout the city by accelerating our reservoir covering program, and work together with other city agencies to expedite permitting for major projects.

Strategic Initiatives

15.1) Support the Mayor's initiatives

- Provide expedited plan reviews for utility infrastructure and assist with specific utility design, construction and coordination
 - Construction of light rail
 - Replacement of the Alaskan Way Viaduct
 - Implementation of the monorail and South Lake Union street car
- Assist SDOT with the Right of Way Management Initiative to improve mobility in the city
- Support the implementation of neighborhood plans

COMMUNITY (cont.)

- Implement SPU's responsibility under the Mayor's Executive Order on Interdepartmental permitting
- Support the Northgate Redevelopment initiative

15.2) Leverage the city's ability to create open space

- Continue work on hard covering Lincoln, Myrtle, Beacon, Maple Leaf and West Seattle reservoirs.
- Implement innovative natural drainage approaches

Strategic Issue

16) The utility's priority of implementing asset management principles require SPU to evaluate programs as well as capital projects on a life-cycle cost basis. We are developing new comprehensive plans for our drainage and water lines of business and setting priorities for utility programs.

Strategic Initiative

16.1) Perform comprehensive review of Community Service programs based on priorities in new comprehensive plans and desired service levels

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Goal: Continuously improve organizational performance for public benefit.



Strategic Issue

17) SPU has had difficulty achieving financial performance targets during the last six years. We are struggling to maintain rates at a competitive and predictable level in an environment of increasing customer expectations and cost pressures, while rate increases in the foreseeable future are significant. To inspire confidence in our customers, we need to show real improvements in financial and organization performance.

Strategic Initiatives

17.1) Identify, understand and adopt outstanding practices and processes from organizations across the world

- Perform a baseline benchmark of the utility's performance
- Identify opportunities for performance improvement based on baseline assessment
- Develop proposed actions targeting high priority functions

17.2) Strengthen the financial performance of each utility fund

- Lower debt/equity ratio for water and drainage and wastewater fund
- Increase cash contribution to each fund's CIP
- Increase reserves for contingencies

17.3) Strengthen accountability for projects and programs

ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE (cont.)

- Establish strong Program Owner functions in Resource Planning, Strategic Operations and the Asset Management Team
- Establish clear roles for service providers throughout the department

17.4) Conduct business process redesigns for select functions in each branch

17.5) Implement administrative efficiencies that better integrate work management and customer service

- Improve accuracy and availability of management information systems including financial/human resource and customer service systems
- Develop a budget and financial schedule inline with strategic decision-making
- Implement more disciplined audit review activities

Strategic Issue:

18) As SPU shifts to an asset management driven utility, it requires a global risk management approach. We need to identify, evaluate and control risk in all utility operations, and mitigate risks in all aspects of the assets we own, functions we perform, and services we provide.

Strategic Initiatives

18.1) Create a program to manage the risk profile of the organization

- Complete overall risk review assessment to determine the probability of major risk occurrences, consequences and the effectiveness of current control measures
- Create prioritized action plan to address top risks to the organization
- Incorporate risk analysis into decision-making processes
- Create well understood rules for decisions involving risk in the organization

18.2) Identify and incorporate critical environmental risks and challenges into the Corporate Risk Management Plan

Strategic Issue

19) Since September 11, 2001, SPU has been developing and implementing a security program aimed at protecting its assets and responding to a range of security risks. SPU needs to complete its infrastructure protection measures and develop or refine security operations, monitoring and emergency response functions.

Strategic Initiative

19.1) Increase security of our utility assets through additional protection measures and enhanced security operations

- Complete Drainage and Wastewater and Solid Waste vulnerability assessments in support of overall SPU and city security risk assessments
- Develop CIP projects to address needs identified in vulnerability assessments
- Implement and staff critical security operations and monitoring functions
- Develop performance targets and measures for security protection systems and security operations activities
- Complete development of policies, procedures and emergency response plans to encompass security operations, including employee impacts, roles and responsibilities

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ASSET MAINTENANCE AGREEMENTS (AMAs)

Contracts between Field Operations directors and the Branch Executive for the maintenance of SPU assets. AMAs include performance targets, efficiency and effectiveness measures, and regular reporting.

ASSET MANAGEMENT

Meeting agreed customer and environmental service levels at the lowest life-cycle costs. Asset management is a structured approach to optimize the life-cycle value of physical assets.

ASSET MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (AMC)

Senior management, who reviews all capital projects over \$250,000. The AMC was established to ensure appropriate decision-making and guidance from executive leadership.

ASSET MANAGEMENT TEAM

Designated SPU staff that works on a number of corporate projects and provides advice or facilitates discussion within branches. The team also helps develop presentations to the Asset Management Committee, including the E-Team.

BENCHMARK

Comparison of specific results achieved by different organizations. A standard against which future performance can be measured.

BUSINESS PROCESS REDESIGN

The review, evaluation and redefinition of tasks and activities for a business process. The objective of business process redesign is to develop more efficient business processes.

CONSISTENCY IN CONSTRUCTION COMMUNICATION PROJECT (C3)

An interdepartmental communications effort called for in City Council Resolution 30322. Participants include Seattle Public Utilities, Seattle City Light and Seattle Department of Transportation with support from Office of Economic Development and Department of Neighborhoods.

CONTINGENCIES

An appropriation of funds to cover unforeseen events and emergencies which occur during the budget year.

HARD COSTS

Expenditures made to construct, manufacture and/or install tangible, depreciable facilities in a capital improvement plan and can be allocated to specific CIP projects.

LIFE-CYCLE COSTS

The total cost of owning an asset during its useful life. Costs include design, construction, maintenance, insurance, rehabilitation, operating and disposal costs.

PRELIMINARY ENGINEERING

The CIP project phase when project alternatives are analyzed and a recommended scope, schedule and budget are developed. Preliminary engineering deliverables include preliminary engineering report, project development plan and project estimate.

SERVICE LEVEL STANDARDS

Commitments to provide specified levels of measurable and valuable outputs to the community.

SOFT COSTS

The labor and administrative expenditures associated with the planning, design, delivery and support

GLOSSARY OF TERMS (cont.)

of CIP projects.

STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PLANS (SAMPs)

Document the actions needed to ensure continuity of services to customers and/or continuity of services necessary to meet environmental service standards.

SUCCESSION PLANNING

Dynamic, on-going process of systematically identifying, assessing and developing leadership for future workforce.

TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE

The concept of balancing social, environmental and financial outcomes and benefits.

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